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in an English version at Drury Lane. Unfortunately for the musical stage, *Fidelio* is Beethoven's sole dramatic work. It was said during the latter years of his life, that he was engaged in the composition of another opera, entitled *Melusina*; but nothing has been heard of it since his death, nor does it appear that any vestige of it was found amongst his papers.

But to return to our narrative. Beethoven's various occupations and ever changing frame of mind had for a lengthened period interrupted his correspondence with Dr. Wegeler, of Coblenz. It was renewed by Beethoven himself in 1810. His letter, which appears to have been written in no cheerful mood, begins with an apology for his long silence, and he alludes, in piteous terms, to his cruel malady, which appears to have attained such a height that his deafness was nearly total. "My good old friend," he writes, "I can almost believe that you will be surprised when you receive these lines, and yet I can assure you, though you have no written proof of the fact, that you have never ceased to be present to my memory. For some years I have ceased to lead a tranquil and retired life, and have been dragged by force into the great world; but I have never acquired a taste for it—quite the contrary. Who has escaped the storm that has been raging around us? And yet I might have been happy, nay, one of the happiest of men, were it not for the evil genius that has taken up his abode in my ears. Had I not read somewhere that no man ought voluntarily to quit life so long as he can do a good action, I should long since, by my own hand, have ceased to live. Oh! how beautiful is life—but for me its charm has fled for ever!"

This contemplation of suicide shows how his affliction must have preyed upon his mind. But yet, in the midst of all his distressing thoughts, he had time for the interchange of friendly sentiments; although everything was now tinged by a recollection of his own sad state. In writing to a female friend who was on the point of marriage, he says: "You are going," dear Beltiuë, "to be married, or are already so, and I have not been able to see you again. May all the happiness with which wedlock blesses man and wife abundantly rest on you and your husband. What shall I say about myself? I cry with Schiller's *Johanna*, 'Pity my fate.' If years are still granted me, I will thank the Most High—Him who embraces all in Himself for them, and for all the weal or woe that may be in store for me. When you write to Goethe, seek out all the words that may best express my most sincere respect and admiration. I am on the point of writing to him myself respecting *Egmont*, for which I have composed the music, and I have done so purely out of love to his poetry, which gives me great pleasure. But, indeed, how can we be sufficiently grateful to so eminent a poet who is the precious jewel of his country! I returned this morning at four o'clock from a party where I laughed a great deal, only to weep nearly as much to-day. Riotous mirth often has the effect of forcing me to retire within myself."

Beethoven, while he held in utter contempt all worldly rank and titles, exalted the dignity of the artist to a very high pitch. His meeting with Goethe at Teplitz led him to make some reflections on both these points in a letter addressed to the same lady. "Kings and princes," he says, "may easily make professors and privy councillors, and bedizen them

with titles and ribands; but great men—men that stand conspicuous from among the common herd—they cannot make. That they must leave alone; and when two men like myself and Goethe meet, we ought to be held in high esteem." So much for his personal vanity, which made him so indifferent to the distinctions which worldly rank alone confers! He then proceeds to give a proof of his consistency when, in company with the great poet, he encountered the Imperial family in the street. "Yesterday, on our way home we met the whole Imperial family. We saw them approaching from a distance, and Goethe left my arm to place himself at the side of the road. Say what I would I could not make him advance another step. I pressed my hat down upon my head, buttoned my great coat, and walked with folded arms through the thickest of the throng. Princes and parasites made way for me. The Archduke Rudolph took off his hat, and the Empress was the first to salute me. These great people know me. I saw, to my infinite amusement, the procession defile past Goethe. There he stood, hat in hand, bowing to the ground. I rallied him smartly for it. I gave him no quarter. Cast all his sins in his face, but especially those against yourself, dearest Beltiuë. We had just been speaking about you. Good God! if it had been my lot to have passed such a time with you as he did, depend upon it I should have produced many, many more great works. A musician is likewise a poet, and can suddenly be transported by a pair of eyes to a more beautiful world, where greater geniuses make game of him and set him excessively hard tasks. What thoughts came crowding upon me when I first saw you in the observatory during that genial April rain. It was a fruitful rain for me; the most beautiful music glided from your eyes into my heart; music that shall yet enchant the world when Beethoven shall no longer lead the players." What a relief to turn from the dark pages of Beethoven's history to his own record of such blissful moments as these! How must they have compensated for the bitter experience he had to undergo of many of the ills to which flesh is heir.

(To be continued.)

#### CRYSTAL PALACE.

ON Wednesday, the 16th ult., the Annual Concert of the Sol-fa Association was given with the utmost success. We have often alluded to the excellent progress of this Society; and have only to say that on the present occasion the choral music was given with even more than the usual amount of precision and refinement, especially the *Preghiera* from *Mosé*, and "Blessed for ever," from Spohr's *Last Judgment*. An interesting test of the power of the choir to sing at first sight was exhibited to the audience, a sacred part-song, the composition of Mr. Henry Smart, having been brought forward, the seal of the copies broken in the orchestra, and the parts distributed at once to the singers. The performance of this composition was most praiseworthy; every note being taken almost as correctly as if the choir had been previously acquainted with the work. Mr. J. Coward presided at the organ, and Messrs. Sarll and Proudman were the conductors.

The thirteenth series of the Saturday Concerts commences on the 3rd inst., under the able direction of Mr. Manns. There will be twenty-six Concerts—twelve before, and fourteen after Christmas; and the names of Madame Arabella Goddard, Mr. Charles Hallé, and Herr Joachim are mentioned in the prospectus as likely to appear during the season. In addition to the compositions already so well known at these Concerts, a number of

novelties are promised; amongst the most prominent of which are Dr. Bennett's *Woman of Samaria*, the "Vintagers' Chorus" (first time of performance), and "Ave Maria," from Mendelssohn's *Loreley*, Schubert's M.S. Symphony in C (from the Vienna treasures; never before performed entire), a new Symphony in D, composed expressly for these Concerts by Mr. Arthur S. Sullivan, and several other works of the utmost interest.

#### AGRICULTURAL HALL.

THIS commodious building opened on Wednesday, the 16th ult., for a series of Concerts, which promise to be in the highest degree attractive. The Hall has been most tastefully fitted up; fountains, banks of flowers and lights, judiciously placed, giving an air of freshness and brilliancy which seemed to surprise and delight the numerous visitors almost as much as the programme of music which was provided for them. The orchestra contains most of the best of our instrumentalists; and there are two military bands, under the direction of Mr. Godfrey. The music performed on the opening night was decidedly of a popular character, and included an orchestral selection from *La Grande Duchesse*, the overture to *Masaniello*, and the *finale* to Beethoven's C minor Symphony, aided by the military bands, a concession to the "million" of which we hope to hear no more examples. A feature in the Concert was the performance of "The Soldier tired" on the trumpet, by Mr. T. Harper; and we must also favourably mention the playing of Mr. Levy on the cornet, and of Mr. Wehli on the pianoforte. The principal vocalists were Madlle. Liebhart, Signora Sofia Scalchi, and Mr. George Perren. The Concerts are under the able direction of Mr. Charles Goffrie.

AN interesting incident occurred in All Saints' Church, at Hertford lately, an account of which we extract from the *Hertford Mercury*.—"Sunday was the 90th birthday of Mr. Charles Bridgeman, and on that day he played the organ both at morning and evening service, and with his old skill. Everything changes now, and church music is not what it was. Some young people like the Psalms played to jig tunes, and musicians of the old classical school don't like it. Our venerable nonagenarian organist always was of that school, and those who love its music—sweet, solemn, reverent, and chaste—are still refreshed by performances which have lost but little of the grace and beauty which made Mr. Bridgeman eminent in years gone by. Mr. Bridgeman has now been organist of All Saints' Church for seventy-seven years—more than three quarters of a century! We are glad to be able to say that his health is good. Long may he live to make us wonder more than we do now at powers so long preserved."

THE members of the Choir of St. Martin's Church, Haverstock Hill, have lately presented two handsomely-bound volumes of Chambers' work "The Book of Days," to Mr. J. F. Goodban (Organist of the Church), with the following inscription:—"Presented to Mr. J. F. Goodban, by the Choir of St. Martin's Church, to express their appreciation of his ability and zeal in the fulfilment of his duties as Organist and Preceptor of the Choir, whilst engaged in that office; and on his relinquishing it, to convey to him an assurance of their best wishes towards him." The testimonial was presented to Mr. Goodban on his resigning his appointment, to become Organist of St. John the Evangelist, Paddington.

THE Dover Musical Union is, we perceive, about to enter upon its fourth season; and from the prospectus, which has been forwarded to us, it appears that the Society has every claim to the consideration of those who desire to practise the best choral music by the great masters. The conductor is Mr. G. H. Payn (who has already proved his zeal and talent in the good cause), and the pianist is Mr. Jarrett.

THE Pianoforte Recitals of Mr. Brinley Richards during an Autumn tour in the West of England, have been uniformly successful, the accounts which have reached us proving beyond doubt, that the "virtuoso" style of performance has not taken such a hold of the majority of listeners, as to render them powerless to appreciate the pure and unpretentious playing of a real artist. The programmes of Mr. Richards have included the names of Scarlatti, Handel, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Weber, Henselt, Chopin, Sterndale Bennett, and Arthur Sullivan. As a rule, the second part of the Recital has been devoted to Mr. Richards' own compositions; his Octave Studies, Caprice in F minor, Pastorale in E major, &c., being judiciously mixed with his lighter and more popular works. Considering the lavish eulogy bestowed upon foreign artists, it is refreshing to be able to record the genuine success of an Englishman—or perhaps we should more properly say, a Welshman.

#### Reviews.

NOVELLO, EWER AND CO.

*Novello's Parish Choir Book.* A collection of Music for the Service of the Church, by Modern Composers.

(Continued from page 517.)

No. 13. *Te Deum laudamus*, in A. Composed by W. H. Monk. Mr. Monk's contribution to the Ely Series is not altogether to our mind. Indeed we cannot divest ourselves of the notion that it is an early work, dating long before the production of those beautiful Hymn tunes which have become as household words. Had it been otherwise, we feel sure Mr. Monk could never have passed from the rich warmth of feeling displayed in the above mentioned tunes to the cold artificiality of the present setting. We are continually being reminded of Boyce's Service in A, which, however favourably it may have been received by the *vox populi*, would, we are sure, prove anti-sympathetic to Mr. Monk, at least since his connection with S. Matthias, Stoke Newington, of which church he is the organist. It is almost unnecessary for us to add, that although this setting reminds us somewhat of Boyce in A, it is better than that popular favourite.

No. 14. *Te Deum laudamus* in G. Composed by Philip Armes, Mus. Doc., Oxon. We congratulate Dr. Armes on the fact that, although a Cathedral organist, he presents us with crotchets, and even quavers in this setting, and altogether proves himself capable of thoroughly appreciating the necessity of a composer writing in the idiom of his own day. He may further be complimented on the fact, that the varying character of the words have been carefully studied, and that the music, as music, is exceedingly interesting. In one or two little matters he appears to be wanting in courage, to throw off entirely the yoke of the old school; e.g. the *Te Deum* is cut up into an unnecessary number of movements; and the latter half of the whole relapses into the old notation. This, to say the least of it, is somewhat inconsistent: still, we are not going to quarrel about little matters like these, when we have been favoured with so much that is otherwise good; and we should be glad to hear more frequently of new compositions from the pen of this conscientious composer.

No. 15. *Te Deum laudamus* in G. Composed by J. L. Hopkins, Mus. Bac. Since writing the above *Te Deum*, Mr. Hopkins has become Dr. Hopkins, to the great advantage of the degree. For somehow, it is very seldom that composers who are able to write such music as that produced by Drs. Garrett and Hopkins, trouble themselves to obtain a degree which can add absolutely nothing to their merits in any way. This setting is distinguished like the previous one, only in a far greater degree, by its novel appearance, for whereas in the former we had crotchets and quavers presented to our astonished gaze, here we have quavers and semi-quavers! but then we must remember Dr. Hopkins is not a Cathedral organist, which makes all the difference. It is true, he is